

# THE UCLA HERB ALPERT SCHOOL OF MUSIC

## DEPARTMENT OF

# ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

H O M A E B O P E O P A L D E M I S A C O N D S E E M V I E C N S T O S N [SEARCH](#)

## Spring 2002 Newsletter: Dissertation Group

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### Graduate Students Form Dissertation Discussion Group

by Sonia Seeman

Dissertation writing has been described as analogous to the loneliness of the long distance runner. The thesis writing stage is marked by a separation from the regular interactions and goal setting of a graduate program. The experience of isolation during the writing period can make the dissertation writing process even more stressful. To ameliorate those difficulties, we have formed a dissertation discussion group. This group was begun by Professor Tim Rice in spring 2000, and initially included recipients of the Dissertation Year Fellowship. At the end of that quarter, we realized that we wanted to continue to work together through the summer, and membership has expanded beyond fellowship recipients to include those working on their doctoral dissertations, depending on availability of space within the group. Since that time, this group has grown from providing dissertation writing support, to providing a forum for feedback and exchange of information on job application process, developing syllabi, polishing articles for presentation, and preparing lecture and conference presentations.

Membership has grown beyond the initial scholarship recipients, and has included: Takahiro Aoyagi, Alice Hunt, Kaye Lubach, Amy Corin, Sonia Seeman, Angeles Sancho-Velaquez, Brana Mijatovic, Robert Reigle, Jonathan Ritter, Pantelis Vassiliakis, and Dennis Claxton (History). We have celebrated the graduation of four Ph.Ds (Drs. Takahiro Aoyagi, Robert Reigle, Angeles Sancho-Velaquez, Pantelis Vassiliakis), and seen the completion of three successful job hunts (Takahiro Aoyagi at the University of Beirut, Lebanon; Angeles Sancho-Velaquez at Cal State Fullerton; Sonia Seeman, post-doctoral fellowship at UC Santa Barbara). Kaye Lubach, Robert Reigle, Jonathan Ritter and Pantelis Vassiliakis have successfully submitted articles for publication.

With only a few rare breaks, we have been meeting once a week since summer 2000 at members' houses or coffee shops. Our

## Calendar

<< AUGUST 2012 >>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Our Next Event:

NAZIR ALI JAIRAZBHoy COLLOQUIUM  
SERIES: STUDENT PAPERS  
on Oct 03, 2012 at 01.00pm  
at Ethnomusicology Lab

meeting protocol was derived from the combined experience of our group members and guided by suggestions from David Steinberg's *How to Complete and Survive a Doctoral Dissertation* (1981). Meetings begin with a short five-minute check-in where each person briefly reports on their progress during the past week, and during which members can also ask for advice. The check-in is followed by one or more presentations of work, and feedback from group members. Presentations have ranged from submissions of parts of dissertation, discussion of particular theoretical issues, and staging a mock defense. We have also edited articles or reviews for publication, given feedback on course proposals and syllabi, vetted job application materials (letters of application, CVs, statements of teaching philosophy), acted as audience members for trial job talks or lectures, and conducted mock job interviews. The meetings end with a short check-out, in which each member briefly states his/her goal for the next week.

The requirements are a commitment to attend, to read others' work and give oral and/or written feedback in a timely fashion, and to present to the group. Not only has our individual work improved, but we have also learned a great deal about editing, sharing information, and participating in a collegial community of scholars. This knowledge we will take with us beyond the dissertation and into our futures as professionals.

[Back](#)

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